

NEWS RELEASE



a division of the
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

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Colonel Jerry E. Adams, Commissioner

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One of the busiest boating weekends is upon us. The July 4th weekend normally results in a higher number of accidents, injuries and fatalities than other holidays and weekends. With the actual 4th on Thursday this year, boaters can expect an extended four-day weekend full of activities in many areas of the state.

Increased boating activity, inexperience and alcohol all play a major role in the increased numbers. The Water Patrol will be working extended shifts and targeting areas where violations result in higher risk of accident involvement. The risk of being involved in an accident cannot be completely alleviated but can be reduced by using good judgement, courtesy, common sense and knowledge of the laws. Colonel Jerry Adams, Commissioner of the Missouri State Water Patrol encourages all boaters to recognize that operator controlled factors such as speed, recklessness and impaired operation can be deadly combinations.

Here are a few safety tips.

1. Wear a life jacket. Approximately 80% of the victims in fatal boating accidents aren't wearing life jackets.
2. Don't drink and boat. Up to 50% of fatal boating accidents involve alcohol use.
3. Watch your speed. With increased speed comes less reaction time when confronted with near miss/hit situations.
4. Attach your emergency ignition safety switch lanyard to yourself in the event of a fall overboard. This will shut the engine off and prevent the vessel from circling back on you.
5. Avoid congested areas and don't jump wakes.
6. Keep a sharp lookout and steer well clear of other craft.
7. Don't overload your boat.
8. Know before you go. Operators should be familiar with the laws and safe boating practices prior to getting on the water. Getting a weather forecast before leaving the dock and watching current conditions as they may develop will assist boaters in avoiding potentially dangerous situations.
9. Do not shoot fireworks or pyrotechnic devices from boats.

Watch the Missouri State Water Patrol homepage at www.mswp.state.mo.us for updates on Boating Safety Courses and News Releases in your area.

MISSOURI STATE WATER PATROL
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